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N HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED POEM BY FRIEDRICH
VON SCHILLER

In the summer of 1904 I purchased of Friedrich Strobel in Jena an album of prose and verse, in the handwriting of Caroline Junot (née Schiller), the oldest daughter of Friedrich Schiller. Among other interesting jottings and fragments, it contains the following hitherto unpublished poem, ascribed by the author of the album to her father. There appears no valid reason for doubting the genuineness of the poem, which Caroline designates specifically as *unpublished*, however difficult it may be to fix the date of its composition:

Ist's ein Geschenk, dasz an den Staub gekettet
Wir durch den Wink des Unerforschten sind?
Wenn er uns nicht von der Vernichtung rettet,
In die des Lebens letzter Hauch verrinnt?

Ist's ein Geschenk, ein Leben, das im Werden
Schon winselnd mit des Todes Schrecken ringt?
Wenn nicht die Zukunft nach dem Kampf auf Erden
Uns tröstend wie die Morgenröte winkt?

Wenn nicht für vieles unverdientes Leiden
Zum süßen Lohn der Ewige uns weckt?
Wenn nicht den Schurken im Genusz der Freuden
Der Zukunft Donnerstimme niederschreckt?

Der Geist versinkt in diesem Zweifelmeere.
Kein milder Stern in dieser dunkeln Nacht.
Wer kennt den Kompass, der den Pfad uns lehre
Zu jenem Lande, das der Tod bewacht?

Du, sanfter Glaube, von Vernunft geleitet,
Du, ew'ger Führer auf der finstern Bahn,
Nur du hast die Versich'ung mir bereitet,
Dasz ich des künft'gen Seins mich freuen kann.

Du hellst die dunkeln Zweifel meiner Seele,
 Du leitest aus dem Irrsal meinen Geist,
 Du siehst es, dasz ich mich vergebens quäle,
 Da alles hin auf ew'ge Dauer weist.

Du lösest das geheimnisvolle Siegel,
 Das uns das Buch der Ewigkeit verschlieszt;
 Du zeigest uns der Gottheit heil'gen Spiegel,
 Wo uns die Blume schöner Zukunft sprieszt.

The argumentative religious tone of these lines points to their early composition as an expression of the poet's view of human life. They are apparently an elaborate formulation of the thought contained in Schiller's four-line epigram, copied by the poet's brother-in-law, Reinwald, and contained in Christophine's posthumous papers. This epigram, published by Bellermand (*Schillers Werke*, IX, 66) as No. 32, *Zuversicht der Unsterblichkeit*, in the *Anthologie auf das Jahr 1782*, reads as follows:

Zum neuen Leben ist der Tote hier entstanden,
 Das weisz und glaub' ich festiglich,
 Mich lehren's schon die Weisen ahnden,
 Und Schurken überzeugen mich.

The common argument for personal immortality, based upon the need of another life for the divine punishment of the prosperously and joyously wicked in this life (cf. the third stanza of the poem and the final line of the epigram) suggests a genetic connection between the two expressions of religious faith. The epigram is terser and artistically maturer than the stanzas of the poem. Without attempting to fix more definitely the date of either, I am inclined to regard the epigram as Schiller's later and final formulation of the thought of the earlier poem.

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